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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationships that exist between the amount of formal athletic experience of recreation administrators and (1) their scores on interpersonal relations questionnaires and (2) their propensity towards risk-taking. The subjects are 545 practicing professional public recreation administrators located throughout the United States who responded to three questionnaires sent by mail. The three questionnaires used to gather the data are: (1) the Personal Data and Athletic Experience Questionnaire; (2) the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation Questionnaire; and (3) the Kogan-Wallach Dilemma-of-Choice Questionnaire. An analysis of the data reveals a significant but low positive relationship between recreation administrators' amount of athletic experience and their interpersonal relations affection scores. However, no general evidence was found to support the hypothesis that recreation administrators who have had extensive athletic experience will exhibit a greater propensity for risk-taking than those who have had little or no such experience. Also, no general evidence supports the idea that recreation administrators with only team sports experience will differ from recreation administrators with only individual sports experience in risk-taking propensity. Recreation administrators who tend to score high on risk-taking propensity (low scores) appear to seek control over other persons and appear to be somewhat unconcerned about other persons liking them. Finally, it is evident that recreation administrators have a rich background of formal athletic participation. (MM)

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# RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ATHLETIC EXPERIENCE RISK TAKING AND INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR OF PUBLIC RECREATION ADMINISTRATORS

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## Introduction

Because certain elements of risk are inherent in decision making and in deciding on alternatives, the effective recreation administrator, for instance, must at times be willing to choose alternatives that are riskier than others if the organization he administers is to make effective progress toward its goals. An example of experiences that may provide opportunities for individuals to develop the skills of the risk taker are those inherent in athletic contests. Players, team captains and coaches often must make, or are otherwise involved in, decisions relative to the strategy of the athletic contest. They may also be involved in decisions, during play, which will directly affect the outcome of a contest. Decisions concerned with personal safety and the interpretations of contest rules are other examples of risk situations athletes in particular must face. Perhaps some sports, particularly team sports, offer fewer opportunities than individual-type sports for developing a favorable attitude for risk taking. Hence, individual sports might be valuable as a source of training for future recreation administrators, it is also possible that those people who engage in athletics were originally attracted to them because they involve risks. There fore, athletic teams are likely to consist of people who are above average risk takers.

A second area in which potential as well as practicing recreation administrators may benefit from favorable experiences as members of athletic teams might be in the development of favorable interpersonal behavior. The experience of being confronted with numerous interpersonal relations problems may be beneficial to the athlete in that it may help him develop an understanding of them and thereby be better able to solve such problems succesfully when facing them as a recreation administrator.

As a member of an athletic team, an athlete is submected to many rules that relate particularly to training and play in athletic contests. Experience as an athlete therefore affords many opportunities for producing and increased awareness of the importance of operating within the rules in order to achieve goals. Such experience may also aid in the athletes developing an affection and respect for other persons. The close association with other players and coaches, all of whom are working toward a common goal that is highly invisible, perhaps makes the athlete more tolerant toward others than would be true of the non-athlete. This may also help to explain the popular conception that athletes in general has contributed much to the breakdown of barriers that have inhibited improvements in race relations.

Livingston (6) notes that evidence accumulated over the last three decades at Harvard University indicates that successful administrators like to manage and direct people. Athletic team experience provides athletes an opportunity to observe others, particularly their coaches, directing and managing athletes. Such experience may permit the athlete to develop insight to enable him to develop skills in directing, managing and controlling those persons who may in later years work on his staff.

One additional possibility is that a relationship may exist between the type of interpersonal behavior exhibited by an administrator and his propensity for taking risks. Such a relationship, should it exist, could indicate that administrators who exhibit certain interpersonal needs to a greater degree than others may or may not be likely to exhibit the risk taking characteristics that Shivers[10] states are the earmark of the effective administrator.

## Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate relations that may exist between the amount of formal athletic experiences of recreation administrators and their(1) personality characteristics of male athletes and (2) propensity toward risk taking.

## Review of Literature

Few studies were located in which were investigated the particular personality characteristics researched by this investigator. Studies reported herein related to (1) personality characteristics of male athletes and (2) relationships between the risk-taking behavior and other measured personality characteristics of selected groups, none of whom was in recreation administration.

At the high school level, findings of one study [11] indicated differences between athletes and non-athletes with athletes scoring lowest of the two groups on measures of femininity and intelligence. Ibrahim [5] studied college baseball, basketball and football team athletes and found that football team athletes scored above the average of the other groups on social measurements and leadership potential but also possessed feelings of inferiority. Booth [2] reported varsity college athletes as scoring higher on anxiety and dominance than college non-athletes and that varsity athletes who participated in individual sports scored significantly higher on the depression variable than athletes who participated in only team sports. Other investigators [15] studied the effects of athletic participation in college athletics significantly influences the personality of the participants. Ogilvie [7] also reports that evidence does not exist to conclude that regular participation in a high level of athletic competition makes a positive contribution to an athlete's personality. However, he states that athletes

who retain their motivation for competition are generally believed to have personality traits of ambition, organization, deference, dominance, endurance and aggression.

Most of the studies located by this investigator that relate to risk-taking propensity were concerned with what has become known as the risky-shift phenomenon. The Wallach, Kogan and Bem [13] report in 1962 that groups tend to make riskier decisions than individuals, interested many other investigators in the findings. Rim [8] in addition to investigating and confirming the findings of Wallach, Kogan and Bem, studied social attitudes and found that they may be useful in predicting individual risk-taking behavior. Cameron and Myers [4] found that college students who scored above their groups average on measures of exhibition, aggression or dominance tend to prefer bets with high payoff and a low probability of winning while those students who scored above their groups average in autonomy or endurance tended to prefer bets with low payoffs and a high probability of winning. Baron [1] found positive correlations existed among measures of risk taking and (1) authoritarianism and (2) belief in luck. Investigators of risk-taking propensity as it relates to individual's ages, generally report similar findings. Vroom and Pahl [12] report that as a subject increases in age his risk taking propensity declines. Williams [16] reported finding that persons scoring high on risk-taking propensity were more likely to desire job change than subjects who scored low on risk-taking propensities among business managers and public school administrators, Brown [3] reported finding business managers possessed the highest risk-taking propensity among the two groups.

## Procedure

The subjects in this study were 545 practicing professional public recreation administrators located throughout the United States who responded to the instrument sent to them by this investigator. One of three questionaires utilized in this study to gather data, the Personal Data and Athletic Experience Questionnaire, was used to collect information concerning the subject's formal athletic ecperience, personal and professional data. The second questionnaire used by this investigator was the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation Begavior Questionnaire (FIRO-B) developed by William C. Schutz.(9) This instrument was designed to measure the interpersonal begavior of the respondents and determine the typical ways they interact with one another. The third questionnaire used by this investigator was the Kogan-Wolloch Dilemma-of-choise Questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed to measure an individual's propensity to take risks when making decisions relative to 12 dilemmas described eithin the questionnaire.

The Kogan-Walloch and Personal Data and Athletic Ecperience Questionnaires were, upon completion of charges make in the latter ofter evaluation, printed and bound in an instrument packet. Also included was the FIRO-B questionnaire which was purchased in printed form from the publisher. The instrument packet was placed in a self-addressed, postage-paid mailing form along with an introductory letter. Upon completing the three questionnaire, the respondents had only to fold over a leaflet, seal the packet and place it in the mail.

The packet containing the instruments was mailed by first class mail to 1,047 recreation administrators who met the criteria for selection

as subjects in this study. Those selectees who did not respond within a four-week period were sent a second mailing of the instrument on which a handwritten request for cooperation was placed at the bottom of the page containing the introductory letter. This procedure resulted in obtaining additional returns of 197 instruments.

## Analysis

All data was transferred from the instrument packet to keypunch cards for processing by the I.B.M. 360-65 computer located at the Lindquist Center for Measurement at The University of Iowa. An attempt was made by the investigator to insure reliability of the instrument packet by designing it to be as free as possible from irregularities that might detract from objectivity in administering it at a future date. The .05 level of significance was chosen to indicate statistical significance.

Of the 1,047 instruments mailed, 57 percent (600) were returned to the investigator. The number of completed instruments that were included in this study was 52 percent (.545). An analysis of the relationship between the amount of formal athletic experiences of recreation and their interpersonal relations orientation (FIRO-B) scores revealed only two significant relationships, both of which were borderline. These were between athletic experience and (1) FIRO-B affection - expressed scores, $r = .12$ ($P = .01$), and (2) FIRO-B affection wanted scores, $r = .10$ ($P = .05$). (See Table 1).

An analysis of the relationship between the formal athletic experiences of recreation administrators and their risk-taking scores indicated two significant relationships. For those 168 administrators with only team sports expereince, an $r$ of .18 ($P = .05$) was obtained. For those 22 administrators with only individual sports experience, an $r$ of -.50 was obtained ($P = .05$). (See Table 2).

Table XI

Coefficients of Correlation Between Athletic Experience Scores and Six Dimensions of FIRO-B

| Athletic score and inclusion expressed | Athletic score and inclusion wanted | Athletic score and control expressed | Athletic score and control wanted | Athletic score and affection expressed | Athletic score and affection wanted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $r = .03$ | $r = .05$ | $r = -.06$ | $r = -.07$ | $r = .13^{*}$ | $r = .10^{*}$ |
| $P = NS$ | $P = NS$ | $P = NS$ | $P = NS$ | $P = .01$ | $P = .05$ |

*For 500 df, $r_{.05} \geq .09$.

Table XII

Coefficients of Correlation Between Recreation Administrators' Risk-taking Scores and Athletic Experience Scores

| | All Administrators (N=545) | Administrators with no formal sports experience (N=55) | Administrators with only team sports experience (N=168) | Administrators with only individual sports experience (N=22) | Administrators with both team sports experience and individual sports experience (N=300) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean risk-taking scores | 5.71 | 5.65 | 5.31 | 6.14 | 5.70 |
| Correlation coefficient | .03 | .00 | .18 | -.50* | .00 |
| Probability level | NS | NS | .05 | .05 | NS |

*Because a low risk-taking score denotes an increased tendency to take risk, a negative correlation coefficient is indicative of a positive relationship.

The investigators hypothesis that interpersonal relations scores may be influenced by the kind of past athletic experiences a participant had was tested by means of a one-way analysis of variance. The analysis of variance among the six sets of interpersonal relations scores of recreation administrators grouped according to whether their athletic experiences have been primarily in individual sports or team sports or who have been non-participants in formal athletics, revealed no positive findings.

The investigator hypothesis that recreation administrators with formal athletic experience will be more desireous of controlling others, more affectionate toward others, and more desirous of being near others than those who have had no formal athletic experience was tested by subjecting selected means to the independent t test for unrelated samples. The significance of the differences between the mean scores for interpersonal relations -- control expressed--were compared for recreation administrators with formal athletic experience and those who were non-participants in formal athletics. No statistically significant differences between means was obtained.

Significant correlation coefficients were found on two of the six dimensions in which relationships between the recreation administrator's FIRO-B scores and risk-taking scores were sought an r of -.13 was found between control - expressed and risk - taking scores, and an r of .09 between affection - wanted and risk-taking scores. (See Table 3).

To test the investigator's fifth and final hypothesis, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted between the risk-taking scores of recreation administrators whose athletic expereinces have been primarily in individual sports, team sports or who have been non-participants in formal athletics. No positive findings were revealed.

Table XX

Coefficients of Correlation Between FIRO-B Scores and Risk-taking Scores of 545 Recreation Administrators

| | Inclusion-expressed and risk scores | Inclusion-wanted and risk scores | Control-expressed and risk scores | Control-wanted and risk scores | Affection-expressed and risk scores | Affection-wanted and risk scores |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Correlation coefficient | .03 | .08 | -.13* | .06 | .06 | .09* |
| Probability level | NS | NS | .01 | NS | NS | .05 |

*For 500 df, $r_{.05} \geq .09$.

An analysis of the data concerning the relationship between administrators risk-taking scores and selected descriptive variables revealed only one statistically significant relationship. This was obtained between the administrators' risk-taking scores and their ages, $r = .11$, which for 545 cases was statistically significant ($P = .05$).

## Discussion

On the basis of this study it appears that there is a significant but low positive relationship between recreation administrators' amount of athletic experience and their interpersonal relations affection scores. However, no general evidence exists that recreation administrators who have had extensive athletic experience will exhibit a greater propensity for risk-taking than those who have had little or no such experience. Also, no general evidence exists that recreation administrators with only team sports experience will differ from recreation administrators with only individual sports experience in risk-taking propensity. Recreation Administrators who tend to score high on risk taking propensity (low scores) appear to seek to control other persons and appear to be somewhat unconcerned about other persons liking them. Finally, it is very evident that recreation administrators have a rich background of formal athletic participation.

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